

"Man-on-the-Street", Denver, Colorado, December 1941

AFS 6453A

Cut A1

Duncan Emrich: All right and here we are in Denver, Colorado on December 9th, 1941, the day that there was a formal declaration of war by Congress against Japan. And we have here a number of representative citizens of Denver who are going to give various views on this subject.

Would you come to the microphone first, if you please, and stand right in front of it here if you will. Will you give us your name?

Howard Belker: Howard Belker.

Duncan Emrich: All right. And your age?

Howard Belker: Twenty-seven.

Duncan Emrich: Twenty-seven. And where did you come from originally?

Howard Belker: Well, I've spent most of my life in Denver.

Duncan Emrich: In Denver. And your occupation?

Howard Belker: Well, right now I'm driving a taxi.

Duncan Emrich: Driving a taxi, fine. Well, now suppose you tell us what your reactions were when this news came along?

Howard Belker: Well, I don't know that I could say that I had any definite reaction.

Duncan Emrich: None at all?

Howard Belker: Except to say that, well I just felt "well, here it is and what's the use of worrying about it?"

Duncan Emrich: All right. Are you very much disturbed about it today since things have assumed a little more serious proportions?

Howard Belker: Well, I feel this way: I had a good night sleep last night and I ate well today and I'm going to continue to do so.

Duncan Emrich: [*laughs*] That's certainly a very sensible attitude. Are you expecting to be called up for the draft?

Howard Belker: I'm going to enlist.

Duncan Emrich: You're going to enlist? Fine. In what branch of the service?

Howard Belker: Well, I've been flying for a long time and I hope to fly in this war.

Duncan Emrich: Good. Well, anything else you'd like to add?

Howard Belker: Well, I hope that after this war's over we never have another one.

Duncan Emrich: All right, fine. Thank you. Now, sir, would you come to the microphone? What is your name?

Bob Seeker: Bob Seeker.

Duncan Emrich: Bob Seeker. And where do you work?

Bob Seeker: Cosmopolitan Hotel, bellboy.

Duncan Emrich: And your age?

Bob Seeker: Twenty.

Duncan Emrich: Twenty. And you're in line for the draft too, I take it?

Bob Seeker: Yes sir.

Duncan Emrich: Were you expecting this?

Bob Seeker: Well, not exactly. It seemed like they've been trying to compromise some sort and when this all happened it seemed kind of sudden.

Duncan Emrich: A lot more sudden than you figured it would be. Do you think the United States is going to win?

Bob Seeker: Yes, but it won't be right away and it will take more time than people believe, because as soon as the Japs are finished then they'll have Italy and Germany to contend with.

Duncan Emrich: You think we're going right into a war against the Axis powers very quickly?

Bob Seeker: Yes sir.

Duncan Emrich: And are you going to enlist too or are you going to wait?

Bob Seeker: No, I'm out here taking physical and mental exams for the flying cadet in the Air Corps.

Duncan Emrich: I see. Where was your home originally?

Bob Seeker: Hutchison, Kansas.

Duncan Emrich: Kansas. Anything else you'd like to say about this?

Bob Seeker: Well, I believe that all the boys that are eligible and are in shape to pass the physical should enlist and give their help.

Duncan Emrich: Fine. All right, thank you very much. And would you come to the microphone please? All right. Your name?

Ray Baker: Ray Baker.

Duncan Emrich: And your age, occupation, so forth?

Ray Baker: I'll be thirty-six next April and I'm the chief clerk at the Cosmopolitan Hotel here in Denver.

Duncan Emrich: In Denver. And you came from Denver originally?

Ray Baker: I was born here.

Duncan Emrich: Born in Denver. Are you married?

Ray Baker: Yes sir. And I have one little girl, five.

Duncan Emrich: Well, what does a married man feel about the state of this world right at the moment?

Ray Baker: Well, it kind of surprised me yesterday. I kind of thought they might iron it out diplomatically, but it seems that they were talking to us while they were making other plans and kind of sneaked up on us, I'd say.

Duncan Emrich: Do you feel that we were more unprepared than we should have been?

Ray Baker: Well, I think we're prepared to a certain degree, but we weren't expecting them to come and surprise us like they did.

Duncan Emrich: I see. Do you feel any great resentment against the Japanese people as a whole?

Ray Baker: Well, I don't know. I figure they were kind of underhanded and that the government more or less should have figured on that. In other words, we were trying to do the right thing diplomatically and they came in the, might say, back door and we weren't counting on that, I don't think.

Duncan Emrich: In other words, all isn't fair in war. You should have this sort of honorable conduct with them as well?

Ray Baker: Well, to a certain degree.

Duncan Emrich: Surely. Anything else you would like to say?

Ray Baker: Well, I don't know. I think that in time, why we will put the Japs in their place more or less. We just have to get organized and get things shaped up a little more and we will give them a good licking, hold them down for a while.

Duncan Emrich: Could you hazzard a guess as to about how long you think it will take?

Ray Baker: Well, I'd say about a year.

Duncan Emrich: About a year?

Ray Baker: Uh huh [*affirmative*].

Duncan Emrich: OK, well thank —

Ray Baker: And we'll have our hands our full, I think, with the rest of the Axis powers and then we'll be all through we hope.

Duncan Emrich: Fine. All right will you come over? All right, what is your name please?

Orrin Hargraves: My name is Orrin Hargraves.

Duncan Emrich: And you are from where originally?

Orrin Hargraves: Beaumont, Texas.

Duncan Emrich: And you're doing what at the present?

Orrin Hargraves: Well, I'm doing a lot of things. I'm going to school, I'm running a mine, and running a hotel.

Duncan Emrich: Sounds like a pretty busy business. Where are you going to school?

Orrin Hargraves: The University of Denver.

Duncan Emrich: What are you specializing in, may I ask?

Orrin Hargraves: I haven't decided upon a major. I really haven't had time.

Duncan Emrich: How old are you by the way?

Orrin Hargraves: Twenty-one.

Duncan Emrich: Twenty-one. Are you coming up in the draft?

Orrin Hargraves: Yes, very soon.

Duncan Emrich: And you're not going to enlist first, you're going to wait for it to come up?

Orrin Hargraves: It's possible I'll go to the Air Corps. I haven't decided definitely.

Duncan Emrich: I see. Well, now suppose you tell us how you felt when this rather startling news burst upon us?

Orrin Hargraves: Well, I think it came as a surprise to everyone. Especially because we were trying to settle things diplomatically. They certainly shouldn't have stabbed us in the back. At the same time if their ego is bolstered enough that will hurt them when we do get organized.

Duncan Emrich: You think we are going to get organized pretty soon, then?

Orrin Hargraves: Oh, very soon.

Duncan Emrich: And how long do you think it's going to take for us to beat Japan.

Orrin Hargraves: Just long enough to meet them in one good battle.

Duncan Emrich: In one good battle and —

Orrin Hargraves: Where the sides are evenly matched.

Duncan Emrich: Well, fine. All right, anything else you'd like to add to that?

Orrin Hargraves: No, I think that's all I have to say.

Duncan Emrich: All right, thank you very much. Now may we have this gentleman come to the microphone? Would you tell us your name, please?

Matt Allen: Matt Allen.

Duncan Emrich: Matt Allen. And your age?

Matt Allen: Thirty-six.

Duncan Emrich: And your occupation?

Matt Allen: Bartender, at the Brown Palace Hotel.

Duncan Emrich: Have you always lived in Denver?

Matt Allen: No. I've been here for about fifteen, sixteen years.

Duncan Emrich: About sixteen years. Where was your home before that time?

Matt Allen: Pennsylvania.

Duncan Emrich: You're married?

Matt Allen: Yes.

Duncan Emrich: Well, what would you have to add to this very grave situation that seems to have come up, that everybody's talking about?

Matt Allen: Well, I've been looking, I've been talking about it across the bar for quite some time now with different army men, different navy men. I formed this opinion that this thing was coming and while it was a complete surprise when it came so soon at the same time, I think it's been coming on us for quite some time, although we didn't expect to be stabbed in the back. I would, myself, like to see the United States start right out and give Japan everything she's got right off the start.

Duncan Emrich: And do you think she's going to do that, right now?

Matt Allen: The American people, to me, have been too tolerant. And I don't think they will. In my own home that's our consensus of opinion.

Duncan Emrich: And do you find, you have obviously talked to a lot of people on this. Do you find that that's the general feeling.

Matt Allen: Well, as this European war came on the opinion of the American people was stay out of it, then gradually it's changed and now, to me, the opinion is "let's get into it and get it over with."

Duncan Emrich: All right, and it looks as if we're going to do that right now, doesn't it? *[both laugh]*. All right, would you come over please sir? Would you tell us what your name is?

Hershell Putnam: My name's Putnam.

Duncan Emrich: Putnam. And your first name?

Hershell Putnam: Hershell.

Duncan Emrich: Your age?

Hershell Putnam: Thirty-four.

Duncan Emrich: And occupation?

Hershell Putnam: Airway Express Agency.

Duncan Emrich: And are you a native of Denver?

Hershell Putnam: No, I've lived all over the world.

Duncan Emrich: All over the world. That's a pretty wide background. Perhaps then, having lived all over the world, you'd be in a position to give us some pretty pertinent comment on how you feel about this situation which has gone all over the world?

Hershell Putnam: Well, I've put ten years into the service and I know a little bit about it.

Duncan Emrich: Oh fine. Suppose you tell us what branch of the service you were in and what you feel about it?

Hershell Putnam: I put six years in the army and four years in the navy.

Duncan Emrich: Were you surprised when this business came up?

Hershell Putnam: No, I wasn't. I'm surprised because it didn't come before.

Duncan Emrich: And what do you think is going to be the outcome of it?

Hershell Putnam: I don't think there's going to be any Japan in three months.

Duncan Emrich: In three months. You don't give us very long. Anything else you would like to add to that?

Hershell Putnam: Well, if they just give us a chance we'll show them what we can do.

Duncan Emrich: Fine. All right [*laughs*], thank you very much. That I think concludes this broadcast coming from Denver in which we have attempted to get a representative group of people to express their views, December 9th, 1941.